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Win every battle with this big,
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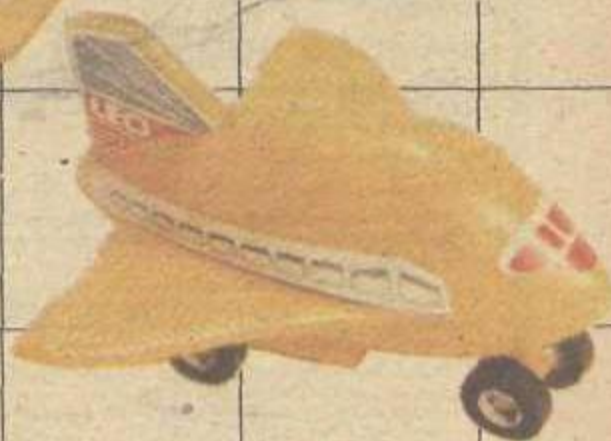
Move your chef carefully. Help him
get more cakes and win!



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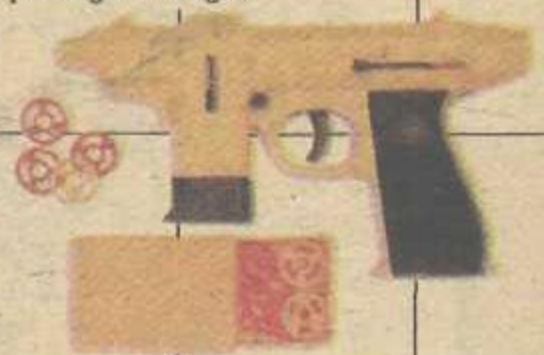
Mail Van

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Write a letter to your friend... then take it yourself in your Mail Van!



Bull's Eye

7 years upward
Aim carefully ... shoot! Congrats - you've got the target!



Fighter Jet

3 years upward
Pull-back mechanism.
Go! Go! Go! Take off for battle!



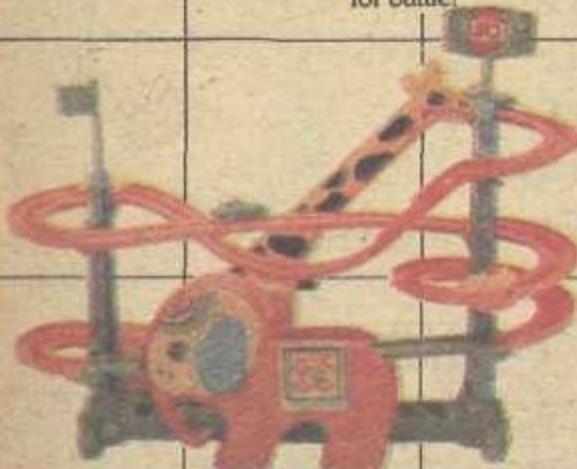
Martini Porsche

3 years upward
Battery-operated sports car with touch'n'turn action. Whee! You're the fastest on the road!



Flying Saucer Gun

5 years upward
Shoots tiny flying saucers. Go into space... be a star wars hero!



Slide Ride

4 years upward
Battery-operated roller coaster. Cars go up and down, round and round ... real fast!



Chook-Chook Train

3 years upward
Battery-operated train set. All line clear! Here comes the superfast express!



A child's best friend

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* **RUINS OF AN EMPIRE:** The glory that
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Monuments of India

* A legend of India, a humorous story
through pictures, *Towards Better En-
glish, Let us Know*, a character of mythol-
ogy and a bunch of refreshing stories and
other regular features.



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हठी चाप्रियवादी च परोक्तं नैव मन्यते ॥

Murkhasya pañca cihnāni garvī durvacanī tathā

Haṭhī cāpriyavādī ca paroktam naiva manyate

The five characteristics of the fool are: pride, foul speech, obstinacy, lack of affection and disregard for others' sentiments.

—*Samayochita, Padyamalika*

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Controlling Editor:
NAGI REDDI
Founder:
CHAKRAPANI

SYNONYM OF COURAGE

There is a book called *The Will to Live* written by Rosanna Benzi and a magazine named *The Others*, edited by her. Both the book and the magazine are in Italian and very few of our readers might have seen them or one likely to see them.

Why then speak of them? The reason is in Miss Benzi. She is now 39 years old. For the last 25 years she has lived in a large metal respirator that encloses her entire body below the neck after a severe bout of polio left her unable to breathe on her own.

In Italy she is the synonym of courage and perseverance. With an iron lung, confined in a hospital room in Genoa, she has been doing more than an average person with all his or her limbs in perfect condition can do. Recently her birthday was celebrated in the hospital cabin in the company of her family members, friends and hundreds of bouquets and greeting cards and telegrams. "I've been able to do things that everybody does, although of course with a little more effort," she said with humility.

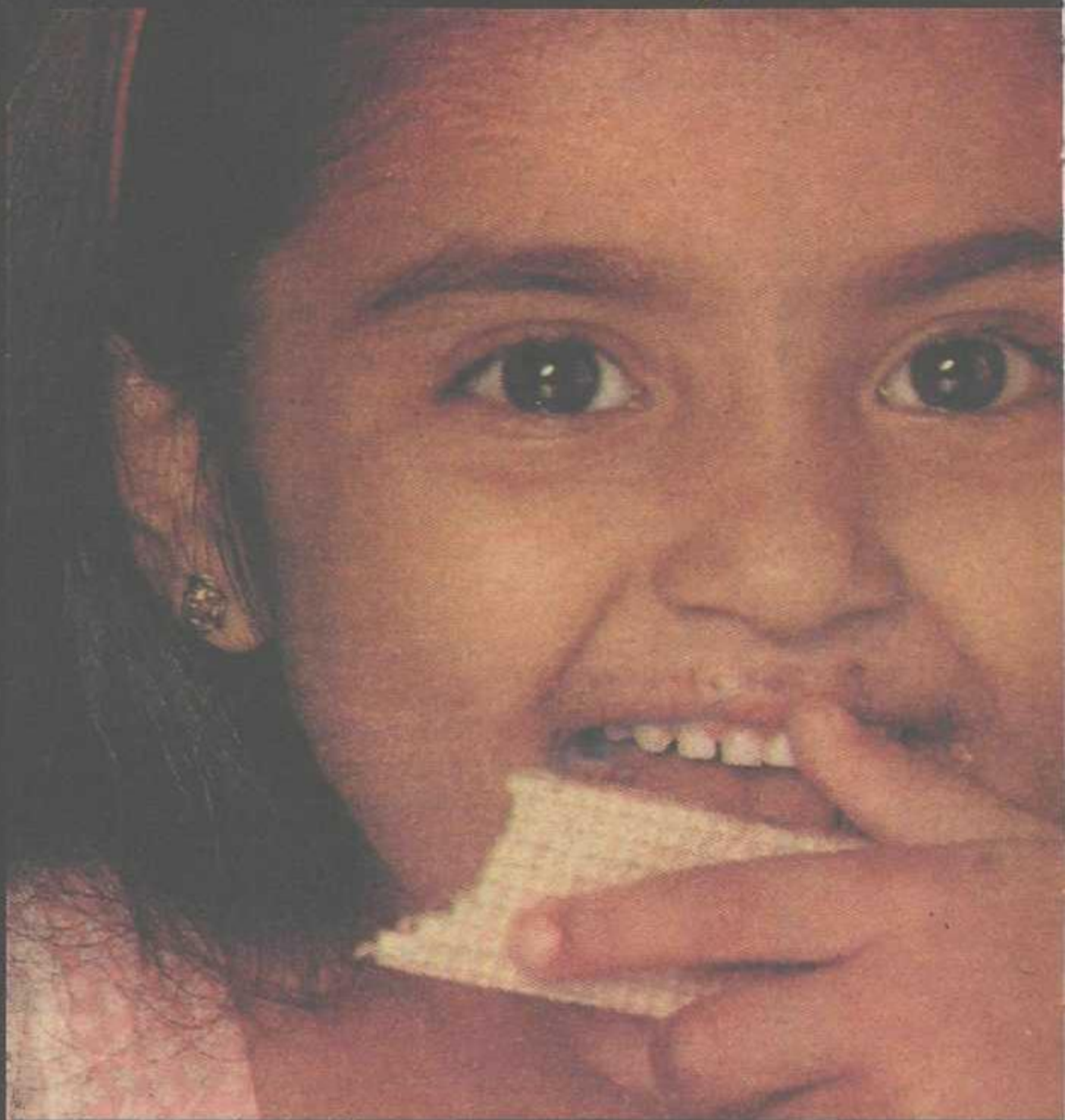
Thoughts to be Treasured

Love is a rare herb that makes a friend even of a sworn enemy and this herb grows out of non-violence.

— Mahatma Gandhi

How to eat

The separated



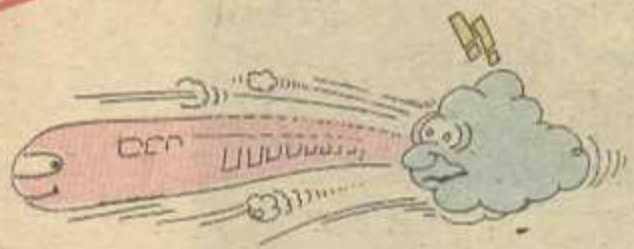
a Pickwick. cream method.

"I open the wafers
and lick all the tasty cream.
Then I munch the crispy wafers.
Then I ask mummy for more..."



Crispy, crunchy, creamy...
...and oh-so-dreamy!

NEWS FLASH

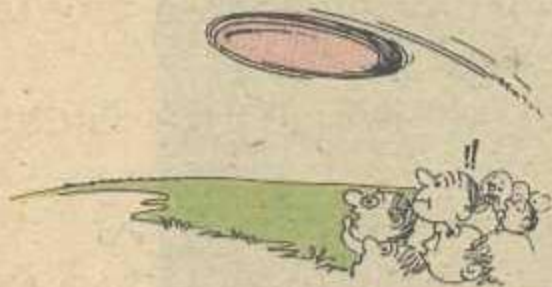


FLYING TRAIN

The Japanese Railways are going to introduce what will be flying trains. They will fly through air, but without wings or propellers. They will rise high by magnetic devitation.

3000-YEAR-OLD ANCHOR

Members of the Centre for Underwater Archaeology of Tamil University have discovered an anchor used by Indian navigators 3000 years ago. It weighs about a ton. It was found off the Gulf of Mannar.



UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS

In China's Central Szchual province, more than 20 people were amazed to see an orange-coloured saucer flying across a clear sky, for 40 minutes.

GOLD FROM THE PAST

A 12-year old boy, while digging inside the Chandragiri Fort near Tirupati found a potful of gold coins belonging to the Vijayanagar period. The boy informed the police about his discovery.



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Any of these prizes can be yours. If you can get hold of the May, June or July issue of TARGET.

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**THE TARGET
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CONTEST**

DID YOU KNOW?

The lead which a pencil of average quality and length has can draw a line 56 kilometres long.



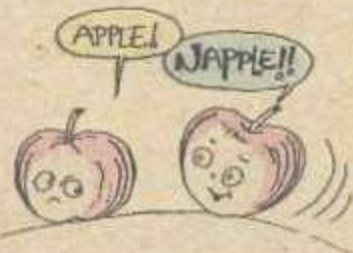
In 1958 a tornado that struck El Dorado (Kansas), whisked a young lady out of her home and carried her sixty feet into the air and then put her down so softly that she did not have even a bruise.



There is only one insect domesticated by man: the honey bee.



Kaspar Hauser of Bavaria could see the stars in broad daylight.



An apple was originally called a napple.



A Japanese child is considered one year old the very day it is born.

Remember the stories your mother used to tell? About how in the past women coped with those five days. And had to depend on old-fashioned home made napkins. Well, those days are gone now. Today if a woman has the right sanitary protection — like Carefree — she can do anything. Why Carefree?

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why choosing the right sanitary protection becomes important.

Why Carefree is the ideal choice for today's changing times.



Because Carefree is so hygienic and it gives you total protection. Carefree has highly absorbent layers which keep you feeling dry and comfortable... always. For heavy flow days, there's Carefree Extra Large. A longer, wider and thicker napkin it gives you extra protection, extra security whenever you need it.

The three way plasti-shield in Carefree ensures there is no chance of leaking or staining. So no more embarrassing accidents... ever! No wonder, with Carefree those five days feel like

any other day of the month. So if you're using ordinary napkins, isn't it time you switched to Carefree! After all, shouldn't you be changing with the times!

*Carefree Sanitary Napkins—
total comfort, total protection
for today's changing times*



*Carefree Because times are changing
and so are you*

Johnson & Johnson

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no political fortunes, yet...

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as the chief wage earner.
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or a professional diploma.**

— from an IMRB survey
conducted in Oct. 1986



It's an unusual magazine. It has a vision for today and tomorrow. It features ancient cities and contemporary fiction, culture and scientific developments, instead of filmstar interviews and political gossip. And it has found a growing readership, an IMRB survey reveals. Professionals, executives and their families are reading The Heritage in depth—40% from cover to cover, 42% more than half the magazine.

More than 80% of The Heritage readers are reading an issue more than once. And over 90% are slowly building their own Heritage collection.

Isn't it time you discovered why?

**THE
HERITAGE**



So much in store, month after month.

CAMP-2155



STORY OF

RAMA



—By Manoj Das

(Hanuman discovers Sita in a garden in Ravana's citadel. He then lets himself be captured by the demons. In order to humiliate him and to see the fun, the demons set his tail ablaze. Hanuman suddenly slips from his captors and jumps from one roof to another putting fire to the magnificent buildings. Leaving the burning Lanka behind, he returns to Mount Mahendra.)

ONWARD TO THE ISLAND

Hanuman was not required to announce the success of his mission. His triumph was writ large on his luminous face, his bright eyes and his carefree movements.

The Vanaras gave out shouts of joy. Hanuman retired with Angada and other leading members of the party into a lonely

corner of the forest. There he reported to them his adventures in detail. "Mother Sita, despite her sorrow, looks divine. Her calm and her strength of mind are incomparable. Her will is enough to destroy her tormentors; all that is necessary is to create a situation for his inevitable defeat of the wicked.





“Why not we send some of our heroes right now and destroy the demons? Hanuman has already done some good work in that direction. Why not we complete this work and rescue Sita and lead her to Rama?” Angada, the excited Vanara Prince, threw this question at others.

But the wise Jambuvan, chief of a heroic tribe with wolf-like traits, discouraged him from going ahead with any such plan. “First of all, to vanquish Ravana is not as easy a task as you, in your mood of jubilation, think it to be. Secondly, we were asked to locate Sita, not to rescue her. That task should best be accom-

plished by Rama,” he said.

Near-by was a large orchard abounding in a variety of sweet fruits and honeycombs. That was a part of the domain of Sugriva. Angada allowed the Vanaras to exploit it. Those who guarded the property tried to check the sudden infiltration, but were swept aside or man-handled by the Vanaras. Infuriated, they rushed to Sugriva to complain against the Vanaras, sure that the king will take the unruly ones to task.

But Sugriva’s reaction was quite different. “Those Vanaras would not behave in such a manner unless they were in high spirit. And what except the success of their mission can raise their spirit so high? Send them to us at once,” was Sugriva’s instruction.

Angada and his party advanced towards Rushyamuk as soon as they received the message. Hanuman bowed to Rama and Sugriva and said, “I have found Mother Sita!” He then handed over to Rama the gem Sita had given him to prove that he had indeed met Sita and none else.

Rama sat overwhelmed by a strange emotion. He was over-

joyed that Sita had been found; at the same time the fact that she was a prisoner in the citadel of the demons gave him great pain.

"I've assured Mother Sita that you'll soon raid the demon's fort, vanquish the proud tyrant and rescue her," said Hanuman.

Indeed, there was no time to lose. Preparations for the expedition to Lanka began forthwith. Within hours a huge Vanara army led by Rama, Sugriva and Hanuman, was on its way to the seashore.

They avoided localities so that they did not disturb the peaceful common people. They saw many a good woman on their way which encouraged them. But as they stood on the hills and looked at the surging waves of the ocean, they did not know how to lead the army through it.

Soon they were confronted by a new problem. Five strangers were seen approaching their camp flying through the sky. They were Vibhisana, the noble-natured brother and minister of Ravana and his friends. Vibhisana had repeatedly advised Ravana to surrender Sita to Rama. By his intuition



he knew that a battle with Rama who had done no harm to Ravana and who was a hero nonpareil, will be devastating for Lanka. But instead of respecting Vibhisana's warning, the arrogant Ravana had insulted him. Hence he and his friends had deserted Ravana.

Some of the advisers of Rama thought that Vibhisana was Ravana's spy who had come either to find out the strength of Rama's army or to disrupt their expedition. But Rama said that friend or foe whoever sought refuge with him must get it. At an indication from him, Vibhisana and his friends descended

before him. Soon all were convinced that Vibhisana was truthful. He became one of the chief advisers of Rama.

"How to cross the sea?" Rama asked Vibhisana.

"That will be possible only if the God of the Sea shows some consideration for us," said Vibhisana.

Rama sat in prayer, invoking the God's compassion. Three days and three nights passed, but there was no response to his prayer from the God of the Sea. On the fourth day Rama took up his bow. "I'll, through an arrow charged with special powers, dry up the sea!" he said with fury. But suddenly the eastern horizon lighted up. The God of the Sea emerged from the waters and, with great humility, suggested that Nala who was the son of Viswakarma, the builder

of the gods, be entrusted with the task of making a barrage across the sea. "Neither the sea waves nor the creatures who live in my waters will disturb your soldiers when they pass over the barrage," assured the God of the Sea. He requested Rama to forbear his arrow.

"Since I have already fixed the arrow to my bow, it has to be discharged. Where do I aim it?" asked Rama.

"At the far north is situated a place named Drumakulya. That has become the haunt of robbers and other kinds of evil-doers. I suffer their touch. Let your arrow dry up that region," said the god of the sea.

Rama's arrow whizzed past the clouds and burst upon Drumakulya, like a thousand thunderbolts. The place became a desert. — To continue



WHY WOMEN IN CHINA HAD SMALL FEET

Thousands of years ago in China, unlike what is popularly believed women had large feet. In fact, their feet were bigger than those of the menfolk. Large feet were considered beautiful.

The King of China, Yang Shun, had a very beautiful Queen Ti Chin. She had feet fourteen inches long, extremely well-shaped. The King loved his wife very much and was proud of her beauty.

The King and the Queen both slept well in their bejewelled

room. They would sleep soundly right through the night. The golden peacocks in their garden would wake them up in the morning.

Unfortunately the Queen was in the habit of sleep-walking. The servants in the palace often found her walking around the palace in her nightgown. She would stare vacantly in front of her. The servants were shocked and would often gossip among themselves about her conduct. They were very careful not to report this to the King.





One day, while walking along the long corridors of his palace, the King overheard two servants whispering to each other. They abruptly fell silent when they saw the King. That made the King suspicious. He asked them what was going on, but they were reluctant to speak. "I will have your heads cut off if you will not tell me what you have been whispering to each other," said the King. The servants had to tell him that they were discussing the Queen's strange habit—that of sleep-walking.

He then wanted to make sure that it was true. He made up his mind to remain awake all night.

Indeed, he saw the Queen quietly getting up and walking out of the room! She glided gracefully through the doors and then into the halls. The King was silently following her. He was afraid that as she walked in her sleep she might hurt herself by falling down or bumping into some object. At one point he resolved to wake her up. He went close to her and put an arm round her waist. He then covered her mouth with his palm so that her scream could not be heard by others. The Queen was terrified. But she gave a sigh of relief when she recognised her husband. They both went back to their apartment.

The King gently asked her, "Why didn't you tell me that you walked in your sleep?"

The sad Queen replied, "Pardon me, my lord, I had this habit from childhood. I hoped that once I was married to you, your presence would drive away the evil spirits which make me wander without my knowledge." The King comforted his wife.

He tied her to the foot of the bed for the rest of the night. In the morning he asked her if she



remembered what happened at night. She nodded sadly and said, "Yes my Lord, I had a dreadful dream. You had gone to a far-off land and I was going in search of you. But I could not find you. Suddenly a fierce dragon caught me in its coils and covered my mouth. My scream could not be heard by anyone!"

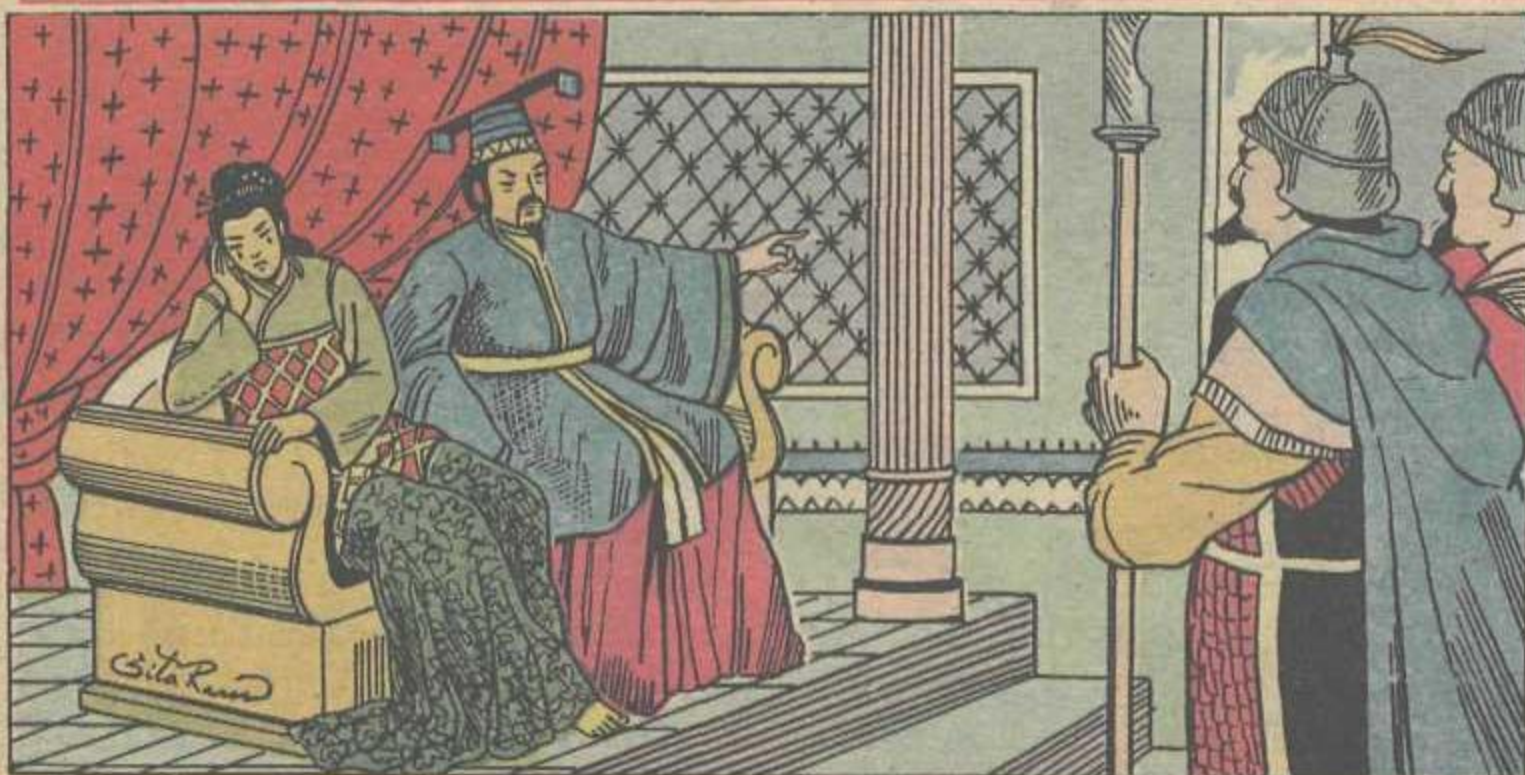
The King told her his version of the event and consoled her saying that they would find a cure for her sleep-walking and nightmares.

"I think my feet are the cause of the problem. I hardly walk during the day. I keep sitting either in the palace or in the gardens. I have such large and strong feet! Since they are idle, maybe they are restless. They roam about at night because they cannot do so at daytime," said the Queen.

The King too thought that this was the cause. Even though they were proud of her long feet, he decided to reduce its size. He asked the most skilled surgeon in the country to operate upon the Queen. The surgeon cut off nine inches from each foot. The feet healed perfectly and the Queen never walked in her sleep again!

But the Queen was the only one who had tiny feet while all other ladies of the nobility had large feet. She felt embarrassed. She even wept. In order to please her, the King ordered that all the women had to pack their feet tightly so that they could not grow big. Thus soon to have small feet became the fashion among the ladies of the nobility. Others too imitated them!

Retold by A. Anuradha Rao



THE HOLY TIGER

The monkey who lived alone in a banyan tree on the river-bank looked on with amazement at the tiger. Close to the banyan tree was a patch of land filled with Tulsi plants dear to devotees of God. The tiger sat amidst them, his eyes closed, for an hour at a stretch. Then he quietly walked away towards the forest.

But even when he walked, he first blowed on the ground in first blew on the ground in extremely careful steps, like a tiger in a circus walking on a rope.

The monkey had seen many a

tiger in the forest, but none like this one. He got very much curious about this unusual tiger.

The tiger's eyes occasionally fell on the monkey. He merely smiled.

One day as the tiger would depart after his meditation, the monkey descended to a lower branch of the banyan tree and asked, "Tiger, Sir, why do you come here every day and sit in silence for a while? And, why do you blow the ground before you as you walk?"

The tiger looked back and said, "Well, my friend, the curiosity of a seeker must be



satisfied. You see, I come here to meditate amidst the Tulsi plants. Don't you know how sacred these plants are? And I blow on the ground before me as I take forward steps just to sweep the path of small creatures—ants and different kinds of insects, worms and all that—so that I don't kill any. Non-violence is my ideal, you know!"

"Wonderful, wonderful, perhaps you are the first member of the tiger-kind to behave like this. How much I admire you, how I adore you!" said the inspired monkey.

The tiger thanked the monkey and went away, as usual

blowing on the ground before him.

The monkey spent the night without any sleep. "If the tiger who lives on the flesh of other animals, can become an ascetic can't I, who is a non-vegetarian, follow such ideals?" he wondered.

Poor monkey, little did he know that the tiger was only pretending to be an ascetic with the sole motive of eating the bonny monkey. It was not easy for the tiger to capture the monkey giving it a chase through the branches of the banyan tree!

Next day, when the tiger ar-



rived in the Tulsi bushes, the monkey gently approached him and said, "O holy tiger, be pleased to accept me as your disciple!"

Saying this, the monkey prostrated himself to the tiger. The tiger at once pounced on him and took hold of him clamping his teeth on the skin of his neck.

At first totally perplexed, the monkey soon realised the situation.

"How novel is the way in which you initiate disciples, O holy tiger! Although it is paining me, I'm sure you're only performing the duty of a guru!" said the monkey.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the tiger, partly because he had achieved his goal and partly because of the monkey's foolishness.

And, of course, he could not keep his teeth clamped and laugh at the same time! As soon as his jaws were slackened, the monkey took a leap and climbed his tree. Now it was his turn to laugh. "Fool! How much time you wasted pretending to be an ascetic!" he said.

The tiger understood that his plan had failed because of his own foolishness. Humiliated, he briskly walked towards the forest. It was not necessary to blow on the ground any more!





Jaidev Das was a resident of Shripur. He had earned enough in his youth. One day his wife and his only son got killed in a boat accident. He was so shocked that he paid no attention to his business thereafter.

His business-partners, however, were truthful people. They regularly paid him his share of the profit from the business.

He had an orchard and some paddy fields. He had a trusted lieutenant in Gopal who looked after this property well. Lakshmi, the wife of Gopal, cooked for him. Although they were servants, they looked upon Jaidev Das as their father.

Jaidev Das was eighty years of age. One day a young man named Vijay and his wife Soudamini suddenly reached his house. Vijay, in a distant way,

was his nephew. But that branch of the family had settled far away a generation ago and Jaidev Das had seen Vijay only two or three times in his life.

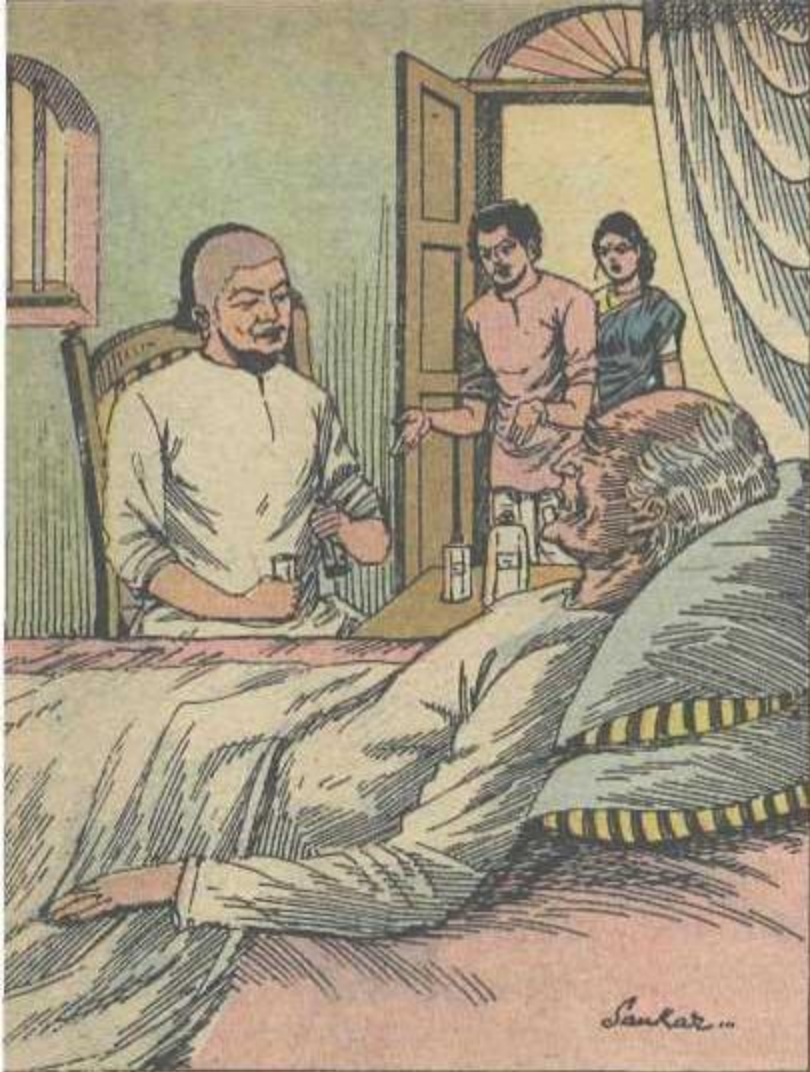
"Uncle, I was abroad for some years. As soon as I was back home, I felt a strong urge to see you," said Vijay.

"Indeed, so strong was his urge that it was difficult to stop him from coming to see you. I thought that it was also a good chance for me to pay my respects to you," said Soudamini.

For long Jaidev Das had not heard such pleasing words. He was delighted. "Since you've taken the trouble of paying a visit to me, don't be in a hurry to go away," he said.

"How can we disobey you?" said Vijay.

Soudamini was adept at cooking. She prepared several deli-



cious dishes for Jaidev Das and never lost an opportunity to speak kindly to him.

One day Jaidev Das could hear Vijay speaking to his wife, "I wonder who will look after Uncle once we depart. God forbid, but how much concern can a mere servant feel for him in case he is down with any ailment?"

"I'm not less worried about it. This Gopal and his wife pretend to be so nice, but Uncle would hardly know that they are villains! They are despatching stolen things practically every alternative day to their own home in their village," com-

mented Soudamini.

"I know that they are swindling Uncle, I'm afraid, they would like him to die soon so that they can shift as much of the property as they can to their own home," Vijay added.

"Don't speak so loud. Uncle can hear you!" Soudamini cautioned him.

Little did Jaidev Das know that the two guests wanted him to hear their conversation. He had been so much charmed by Vijay and Soudamini and now he was so angry with Gopal and Lakshmi that he decided on a course of action immediately. He made a will making Vijay his heir and asked Gopal and Lakshmi to leave!

But the whole situation was found changed in no time. Vijay was no longer humble towards him, nor did Soudamini cook with care. Of course, she did cook delicious dishes, but only for herself and her husband. "You should eat little at your age and eat simple items," she told Jaidev Das.

By and by they proved rude towards Jaidev Das. The old man repented for driving Gopal and Lakshmi away. But what

could he do now?

He fell ill. Five miles away from his village lived Vivek Mishra, his close friend and a renowned physician. He asked Vijay to call him.

"Uncle, I think it is not right for you to take a lot of medicines at this age. Better call God!" suggested Vijay.

"Vijay, it is very thoughtful of you to give such an advice to me. Only one's own man can be so kind," he commented. Luckily a villager came to see him for some business. He sent word to Vivek Mishra through him.

Vivek Mishra came the same day. He examined Jaidev Das

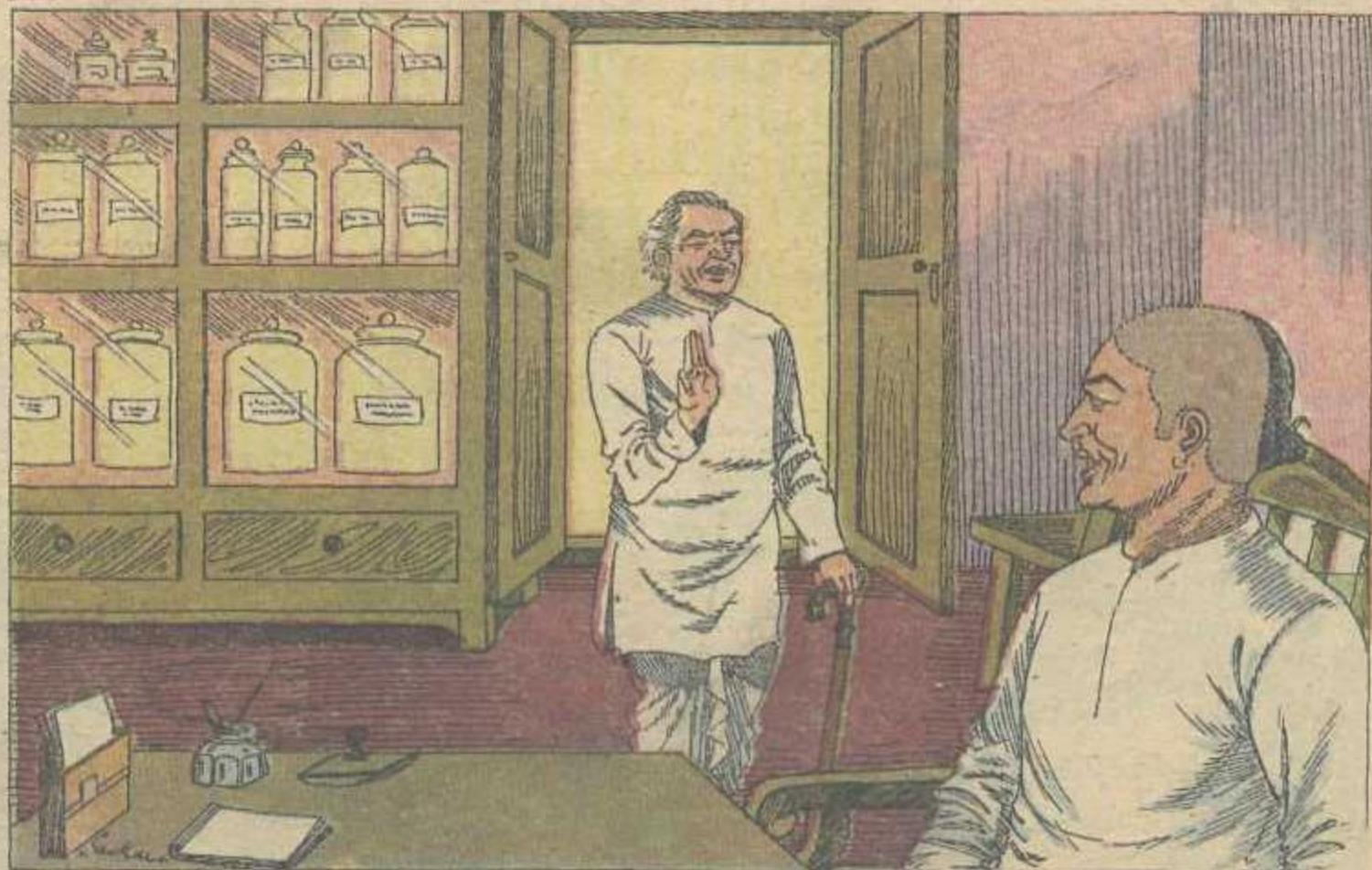
and said, "It is good you called me today. Otherwise your disease would have proved fatal. However, now you are sure to get well. I will explain to your nephew how to give you the medicine I am leaving here."

Vivek Mishra took Vijay out and spoke to him and left.

Jaidev Das recovered completely on the third day. On the fourth day he got into a palanquin and paid a visit to Vivek Mishra's house.

"Thank you for the excellent medicine," said he.

"Tell me, how many times every day were you given the medicine?" asked the physician.



"Six times," answered Jaidev Das.

Vivek Mishra became grave. "Get rid of that Vijay today itself!" he said in a determined voice.

"Why?"

"I had told your nephew not to give that medicine to you more than thrice. I had said that while three doses will cure you, four or more doses will kill you, such was the nature of that medicine! Obviously he wanted to kill you!" explained Vivek Mishra.

Jaidev Das looked shocked. "But how am I alive then?" he asked.

"My friend, the medicine was really such that more than four doses would do any patient good. But I wanted to put Vijay to a test!" said Vivek Mishra.

After a minute Jaidev Das sighed and said again, "Only if Gopal and Lakshmi were with me!"

"Well they can be with you!" said Vivek Mishra. He then called the couple. Jaidev Das was delighted. He came to know that after he dismissed them from his service, they came to Vivek Mishra and began helping him in his work. From the beginning Vivek Mishra had suspected Vijay's motive.

The very next day Jaidev Das had his will redrawn. He arranged for half of his property to go to Gopal and the other half to the village welfare fund, after his death. Vijay and Soudamini left his house wiping their eyes; Gopal and Lakshmi were back, also wiping their eyes but wiping tears of joy!





A BET

On the banks of the Godavari lived two landlords, Bhishmadev and Vijaydev. They were great friends. Often one of them would visit the other and the two would pass time together playing or discussing.

One evening, while Vijaydev was Bhishmadev's guest, the two friends sat in the open, chitchatting. Soon Bhishmadev's servant in charge of his cows returned from the fields. With the cattle was a frothy white ram. It came running to Bhishmadev and Bhishmadev brought out some beans from his pocket and fed it.

"It is a lovely ram," commented Vijaydev.

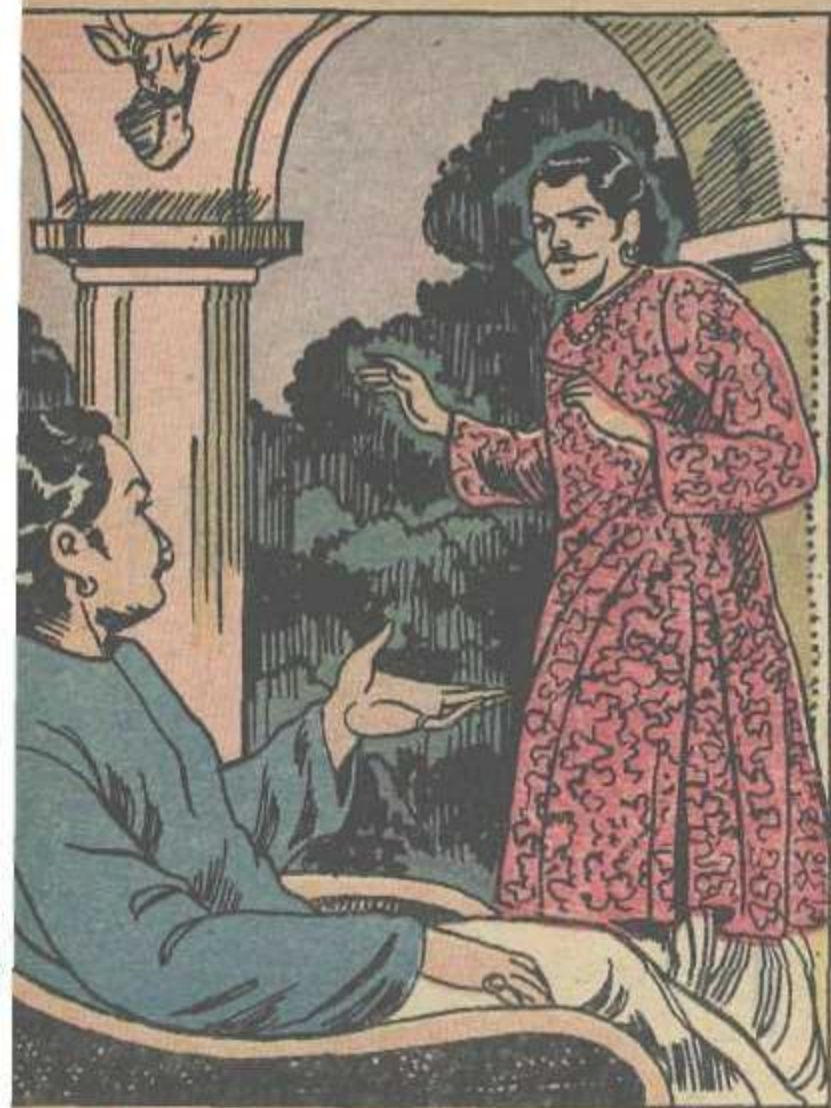
"It is. I love it so much that I'm prepared to sacrifice anything for it," said Bhishmadev.

"In that case how do you send it to the fields with an ordinary servant? You should keep it close to your house!" observed Vijaydev.

"The servant who leads it to the fields is no ordinary servant but Ranga, the most faithful one," said Bhishmadev.

"My brother, you are most credulous. Do you mean to say that a servant can be fully trusted?" asked Vijaydev.

"Well, many or at least some can be. Among them is Ranga. I have never heard him speak a lie!" said Bhishmadev.



"You make me laugh. It will take me an hour to prove that he can speak a lie!"

"An hour? You can try for a full week. I'm sure, you cannot make him utter a lie," asserted Bhishmadev.

After some more arguments the two friends agreed on a bet. If Vijaydev can make Ranga speak a lie, Bhishmadev will give him five thousand rupees. If Vijaydev fails, Bhishmadev will realise an equal amount from him.

Luckily for Vijaydev a servant of his named Raghu came to him from his home with a message. Raghu was extremely

clever. Vijaydev told him all about the bet and sought his assistance in making Ranga speak a lie.

"Leave it to me, *huzoor*, I'll do the needful," said a confident Raghu.

The same evening he found out many things about Ranga. Ranga desired to marry a girl named Sumati. But Sumati's father was reluctant to marry his daughter to Ranga because Ranga was so poor!

Raghu met Sumati and was very frank with her. "Look here, my sister, I am badly in need of a ram with some special traits. It is for a ritual sacrifice. The landlord has such a ram and Ranga is its custodian. He will not sell it to me. Only if you ask it as a gift from him, I am sure he will give it away. I will pay you no less than five thousand rupees—a fortune! You can give that to Ranga. He will become rich. Your father will have no objection to your marrying him!"

Sumati's face brightened up. Raghu pushed the money into her hands. Five thousand rupees in those days meant a huge amount of wealth. She had never seen ten rupees at a time.

How can she refuse it?

She met Ranga the same evening and told him, "Give me the landlord's pet ram or I shall die!"

"If you die, I may also die, but I cannot part with the landlord's ram!" said Ranga.

"Tell the landlord that it was lost in the fields. Nobody will see the ram. It will be taken away in the dark!" she said.

"I cannot let it happen like that!" shouted Ranga.

Sumati wept. Both went on arguing with each other for long. Then suddenly Ranga said, "All right. Have the ram!" He went and brought the ram and handed it over to Sumati, to the latter's great joy.

Raghu who overheard everything hiding behind a bush, ran to his master and reported that

his mission was successful. Ranga will now tell Bhishmadev that the ram was lost.

An hour later, the two landlords sat in the open when Ranga came there, his head hung.

"What is the matter, Ranga? I hear that the ram is stolen. Is that so?" asked Bhishmadev.

"It is not so, Sir. I gave it away to Sumati when she threatened to kill herself. I know the man who has bought it from her. Just allow me to get it back from him forcibly. I seek your permission because he is no ordinary buyer, but a servant of an important man!" said Ranga.

"I lose! I lose!" said Vijaydev. "But I'm happy about it. Let Ranga keep the money," he added.





THE SILENT PRINCESS

The King of Avanti had a daughter named Shobha who was as beautiful as she was intelligent. As she grew up, her fame spread to the kingdoms around Avanti.

No wonder that several princes and kings desired to marry her. The King received proposals galore. He asked the Princess, "What do you say? Whom should we choose for your husband?"

"Father, I have no inclination to marry a prince or a king. They are not necessarily wise or intelligent. I can marry a commoner should he prove witty enough!" replied the Princess.

"I don't mind your marrying a commoner, but how will you judge his wit?" asked the curious King who had great faith in his daughter's capacity to

decide for herself.

"Father, I will keep silent.. Whoever can make me talk can marry me," said the Princess.

"Not a bad idea," said the King. Accordingly announcements were made. Many young men met the Princess and tried to make her talk, but in vain. They returned disappointed.

The Prince of Sumantpur who was on a tour of the land heard of this condition laid down by the Princess for her marriage. He presented himself in the palace, ready to try his luck.

As soon as he saw the Princess, he feigned surprise and said, "You never told me, when you married me at the temple, that you were the Princess of Avanti!"

Even then the Princess kept silent. The Prince looked at the



King and the others who were present and said, "It was a rainy night last year. The Princess was returning from her maternal uncle's house when some bandits tried to kidnap her. I saved her from them and she married me at the nearest temple. She has laid down this condition just to avoid marriage with anybody else."

Then turning to the Princess,

he said, "Come on, my wife, let us go!"

"Shut up! You have no right to call me your wife! You are lying," shouted the Princess.

"Thank you. Now I will have the right to call you my wife!" said the Prince smiling.

That was true, for he had made her talk! Soon they were married amidst pomp and show.

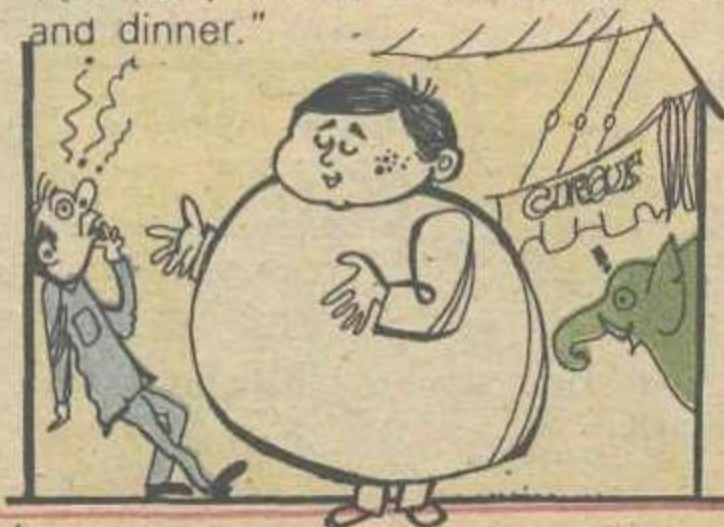
THE CANDIDATE'S CONDITION

A great eater went to the circus-owner and wanted employment. "I can surprise your spectators by eating before them two hundred *parathas*, two potfuls of curry, one hundred *ladoos*, and one hundred *rasogollas*," he claimed. And he demanded a good salary.

To scare him, the circus-owner said, "You must remember that on some days we have four shows!"

"I see!" the man became thoughtful

and then said, "I don't mind that, provided you give me enough time to retire to my room and have my regular breakfast, lunch, afternoon snacks and dinner."



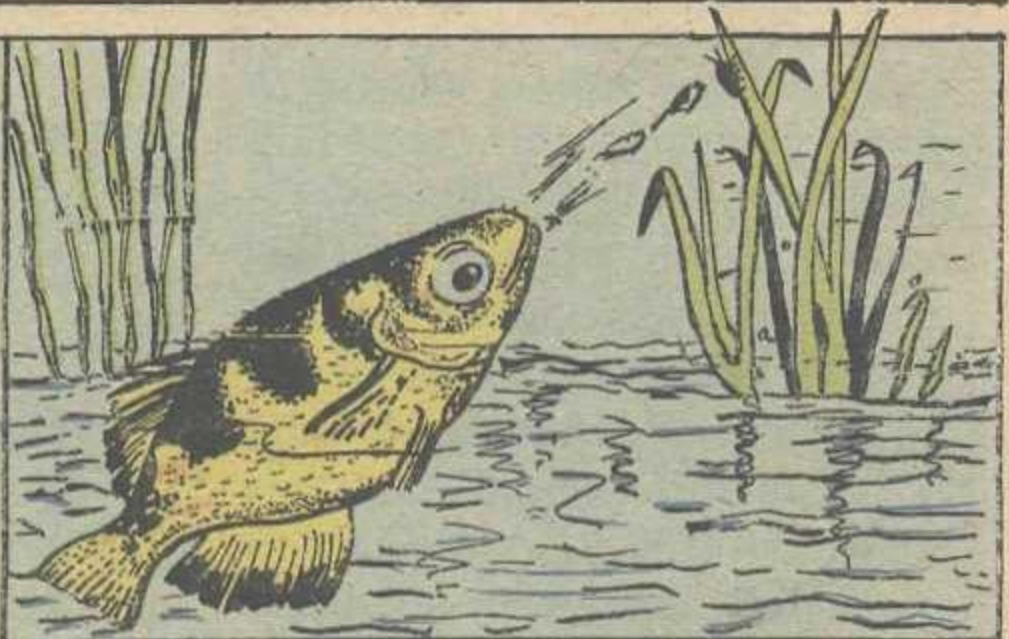
Jet propelled Octopus



THE OCTOPUS SWIMS BACKWARDS BY MEANS OF A JET OF WATER SHOT FROM A SIPHON PIPE IN ITS HEAD. IT OFTEN BUMPS INTO OTHER CREATURES.

ARCHERFISH

THE ARCHERFISH OF SOUTH EAST ASIA SHOOTS DOWN INSECTS FROM OVERHANGING VEGETATION BY SQUIRTING WATER AT THEM WITH GREAT FORCE. THE VICTIMS ARE THEN EATEN.



Life long Mates



THE BEAVER IS ONE OF THE FEW ANIMALS THAT MATES FOR LIFE. BOTH MALE AND FEMALE WORK TOGETHER BUILDING THE LODGE AND IN REARING THE YOUNG. UNLIKE MOST OTHER ANIMALS, THE ADOLESCENTS ARE NEVER DRIVEN FROM HOME. OFTEN THEY SET UP THEIR OWN LODGE NEARBY.

WATER SOCCER !

WATER POLO WAS ONCE CALLED "WATER SOCCER". IT ORIGINATED IN BRITAIN DURING THE 1870'S.



RACING GREYHOUNDS CAN REACH A SPEED OF AS MUCH AS 45.45 MPH (73.14KMH)



SPEED HOUND

POK-TA-TOK

A FORM OF BASKETBALL CALLED 'POK-TA-TOK' WAS PLAYED BY THE MAYAS OF MEXICO AS EARLY AS THE 7TH CENTURY. THE MODERN GAME WAS DEVISED AT SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE, MASSACHUSETTS, U.S.A IN 1891.





THE GIFT THAT CANNOT BE RETURNED

Shanta was the only child of Ramji, the landlord. Shanta completed her studies in the city and returned home. Now, her father was eager to marry her off.

And he had already chosen a match for her—Sudhir, the son of the famous diamond merchant Jailal. Ramji and Jailal were great friends.

But neither Sudhir was interested in marrying Shanta nor Shanta was in marrying Sudhir. It was because Shanta desired to marry Arup, a gifted writer. Sudhir and Arup were great friends.

But the problem was, Ramji and Jailal were such personalities that it was difficult for these young people to say anything to their face.

“Get ready for your wedding,

my child!” One fine morning Ramji told Shanta. “The auspicious date comes early next month. And, by the way, Arup’s father proposed his son’s marriage with you. I avoided him.”

“But, father, I dreamt my loving mother last night,” said Shanta calmly.

Now, Ramji grew very serious when the subject of his dead wife was brought in. “What did you dream, my child?” he asked eagerly.

“Mother said that whoever of the two suitors will give you a gift which cannot be returned, should marry you!” informed Shanta.

“I see!” Ramji remained silent for a while. Then he smiled. “Good,” he said, “I will ask my friend Jailal to send such a gift

to you through Sudhir that you cannot return it!"

Next week Sudhir dutifully brought to Shanta a costly diamond necklace. Naturally, both Ramji and Jailal were sure that it was too valuable a thing for Shanta to make up her mind to return it!

Arup presented her a manuscript. It was a book written by him on the purpose of life, the value of love and such issues. Shanta read it so did her father, Ramji.

"It is a wonderful book. I enjoyed it thoroughly and learnt a lot from it," Ramji confessed.

"Father, I too enjoyed it immensely and learnt from it," said Shanta.

"But return it to him," advised Ramji.

Shanta smiled. "Father, how can I return it?" she asked.

"Why? What is the problem with returning it? If you cannot, I will return it!" said Ramji confidently.

"How can you return it, Father? You cannot, even if you try to!"

"What do you mean?" asked Ramji, surprised.

"Father! You can return the notebook, but the real book is not the notebook but the ideas





which you enjoyed and from which you learnt. How can you return what has already become a part of your consciousness?" asked Shanta.

Ramji woke up to the truth in his daughter's observation.

"What is to be done, then?" he asked.

"Father, if you don't wish to go against Mother's instruction, you know what to do!"

"Hm! Well, my child, get ready to marry Arup. I'm sorry, but I cannot do otherwise. You

have to be satisfied with a poor writer. I will see to it that you don't suffer!" said Ramji.

"Thank you, Father!"

That afternoon Sudhir, Arup and Shanta had a pleasant get-together. "Now, Sudhir, you must take the necklace back!"

"Give it back to me to prove that this was a gift which could be returned, while Arup's gift could not be returned. But do not feel surprised to find it again with you, for I am going to present it to you on the occasion of your wedding!" said Sudhir.

HOMESICK

Sharat and Suman were walking through the park when Sharat said, "I'm homesick!"

"Then who asked you to come out of home?"

"That is why I came out, you fool. I was sick of home!"



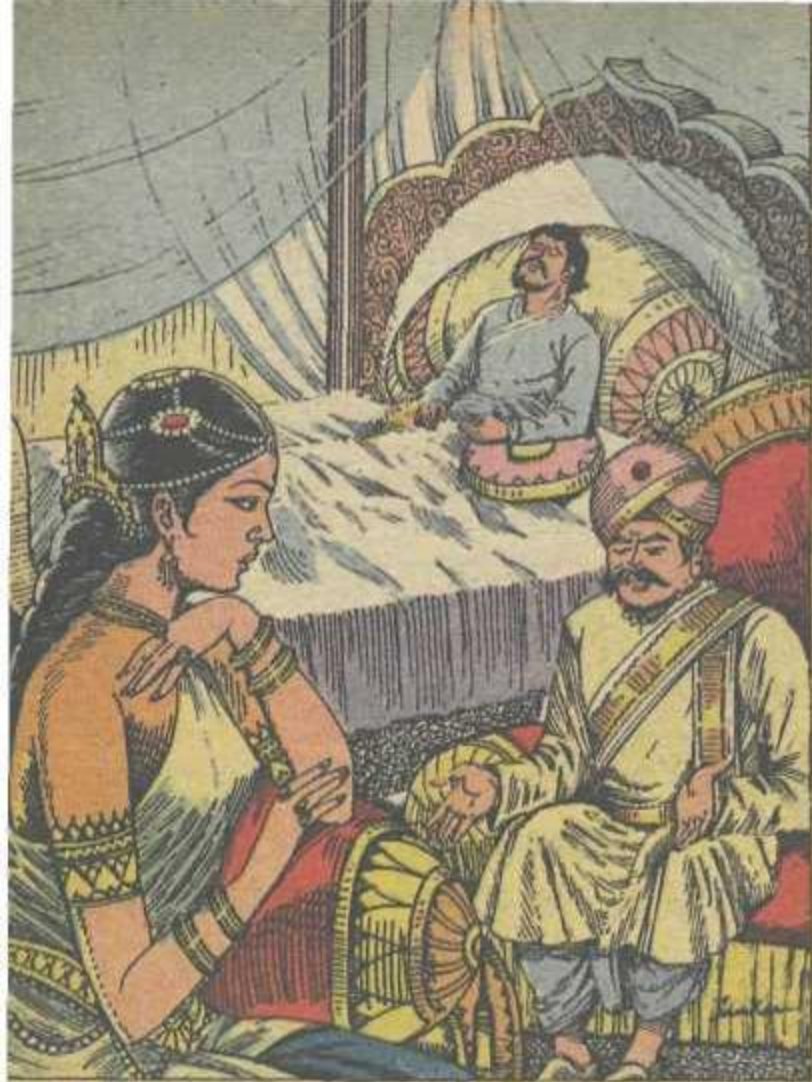
**New Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire**

**A REWARD
AND
A RIDDLE**

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. At intervals of the rumbling of thunder and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning showed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulders, the Vampire that possessed the corpse observed, "O King, you wish to win some worthy trophy through this effort of yours, isn't that so? But do you know that sometimes people suddenly change their minds and deprive themselves of rewards? Well, let me illustrate my point with a story. Pay attention to my narration. That should bring you some relief."





The Vampire went on: King Shankar Verma ruled over the Kingdom of Ujjalpur. He had no son, but he was lucky in his only daughter, Princess Susmita.

The Princess was so wise and conscientious that she helped the King more than his ministers. The King had no regrets for his not having a son. Princess Susmita was equal to the most brilliant son one could hope to have.

All was well, but one day, while hunting in the forest, the King was bitten by an unknown insect. At first he did not care for the incident. But in a few

days it was observed that the poison of the insect was draining all energy out of him. He took to bed. He not only lost appetite but also found every kind of food tasteless.

Soon he fell into a swoon. Nothing would make him talk.

All the renowned physicians of the Kingdom examined him, but nobody knew how to cure him.

The Princess held consultations with the ministers and it was announced that whoever can cure the King will receive a huge sum of money or, if he so chooses, a part of the Kingdom.

Far from the capital of Ujjalpur, in a small village, lived a poor young man named Sumant. He desired to marry the beautiful daughter of the Village Chief. But his proposal was rudely rejected by the girl's father. It was because he was so poor!

He decided to take his own life. Accordingly he climbed a mountain. His intention was to take a leap to his death.

But before he had done so, he heard a laughter. He looked back and saw a giant approaching him slowly.

Although Sumant was ready

to die, he was scared. However, he showed no sign of fear.

"Bravo, young man, I had never before seen a man who would stand fearless before me. Well, I don't like to eat a brave young man," said the giant.

"Giant, Sir, I don't mind your eating me. I was going to throw myself into the gorge in order to die!" said Sumant.

"Oh, I thought that you were brave. But, I see, you are coward to the extreme! No, I won't eat such a despicable creature!" said the giant.

Sumant gathered courage and said, "I thank you for your kindness, but your kindness will not mean anything for me unless I get over the difficulties for which I was going to commit suicide." Then he narrated his woes.

The giant heard everything with patience and said, "I think I can easily help you to grow rich. You see, the King is lying in a serious condition and it has been announced that whoever can cure him will get as reward either a huge sum of money or a part of the Kingdom. I know the cure. Here it is." The giant pointed at a bush and said again, "Pluck enough leaves



from these plants. Crush them and mix their juice with milk and honey. Make the King drink the potion once every day for four days. He will recover fully. You can then claim your reward. It will be wise for you to have money instead of a part of the Kingdom."

Sumant thanked the giant profusely and collected the medicinal leaves and went to the capital. He was of course hard put to convince the ministers to let him treat the King. It is because he could not prove that he had cured a single person of any disease earlier and at the same time he did not wish to



reveal his secret. However, the Princess persuaded the Ministers to give him a chance.

The King showed signs of recovery within minutes of Sumant putting his potion in his mouth. All were pleasantly surprised. After four days all signs of the ailment had disappeared; it was only a matter of time for the King to regain his lost strength and health.

Sumant was given a grand reception by the nobility. The King asked him, "What would you have for your reward—a part of the Kingdom or money?"

"Your Majesty, kindly allow

me a year's time to come to a decision," said Sumant.

"That is all right!" was the King's ready response.

Sumant took leave of the King and the Princess and went to meet a retired general of the King's army. For three months he learnt martial art from him. Then he enrolled himself as a student of a physical instructor and learnt gymnastics and wrestling from him. Then he lived with a great scholar and learnt from him fundamentals of philosophy and received lessons in scriptures.

At the capital there used to be held an annual competition in physical feats and fencing, shooting, etc. Sumant took part in the competitions and came out with flying colours in almost every item.

The King was very happy with him. "Have you come to a decision regarding your reward?" he asked him.

"Yes, your Majesty, but the reward I seek is different from what you offered. Since you're ready to give me a part of the Kingdom, why not give the Princess in marriage to me?"

The King became grave. Then he said, "Young man, this

is a matter in which my daughter alone can take a decision. I shall arrange a meeting between you two!"

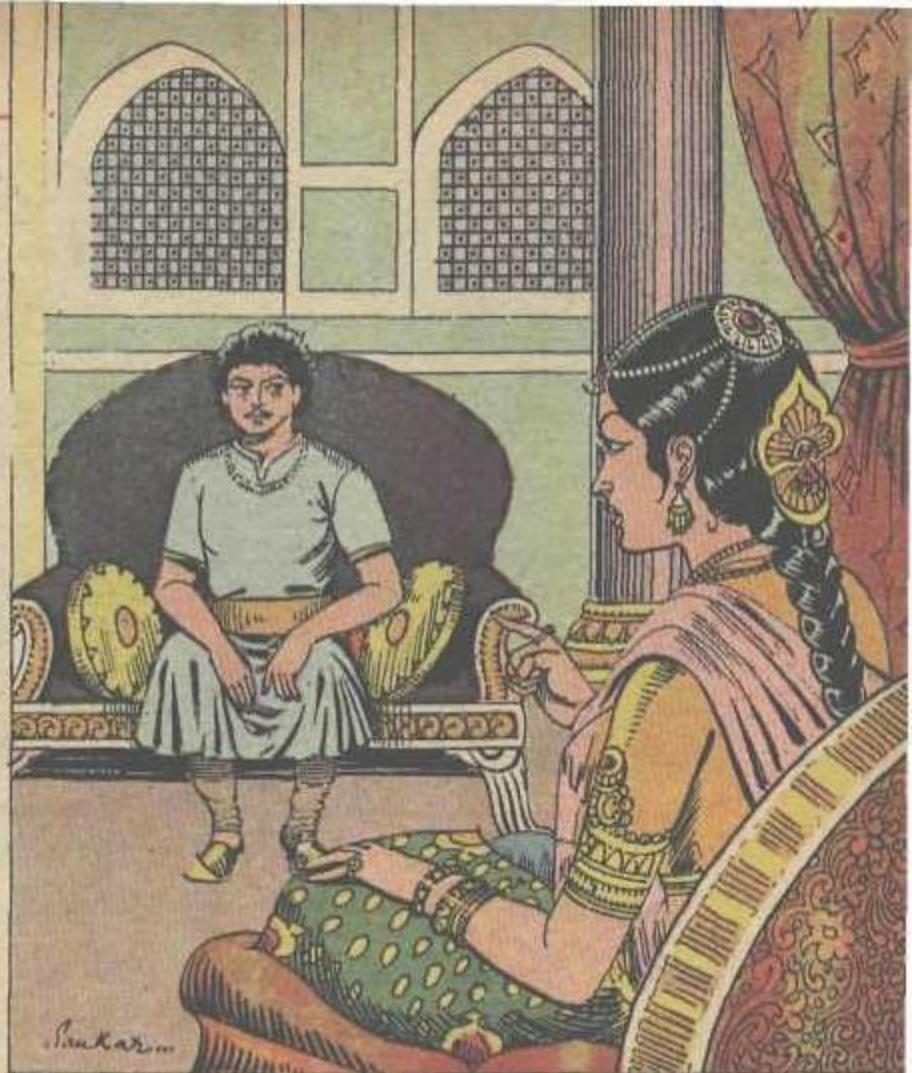
Sumant met the Princess and proposed marriage with her. The Princess put several questions to him and then asked him. "Sumant, tell me, who is greater between the sun and the moon?"

"The sun, of course!" said Sumant.

"Won't you like to be like the sun rather than the moon?" observed the Princess.

Sumant sat silent for a while. Then he thanked the Princess and bade goodbye to her. From the King he took money as his reward and returned to his village. He bought some valuable property and also started a business. When he proposed to marry the Village Chief's daughter, the Village Chief only agreed too readily to it.

The Vampire fell silent for a moment. Then he demanded of King Vikram in a challenging tone: "O King, what is the meaning of the riddle the Princess threw at Sumant? And what did Sumant understand that he preferred money to a part of the Kingdom? Answer



me, if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your neck!"

King Vikram answered forthwith: "While talking to Sumant, the intelligent Princess must have found out that he did not have the making of a King. To rule a Kingdom, small or big, it was not enough to learn a few lessons in physical culture and scriptures. One must have a different kind of courage and quality for that. While Sumant coveted a part of the Kingdom, he knew that he will not be an able ruler. But he knew that the Princess was an able administrator. If he married the Princess,



he would be able to rule the Kingdom with her help and, what is more, he will get the whole Kingdom in due course. He had no special love for the Princess. In fact he loved the daughter of the Chief of his own village. The Princess indicated what is good for him through a riddle because turning down his proposal openly would have hurt him. Just as the sun shone in his own glory, Sumant could live a life with his own merit. If

he ruled the Kingdom through the Princess, it will be like shining as the moon. The moon shone with light borrowed from the sun! Even the giant knew that a man who attempts to kill himself does not deserve to be a King. That is why he had advised Sumant to claim money as his reward."

No sooner had King Vikram concluded his answer than the Vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.

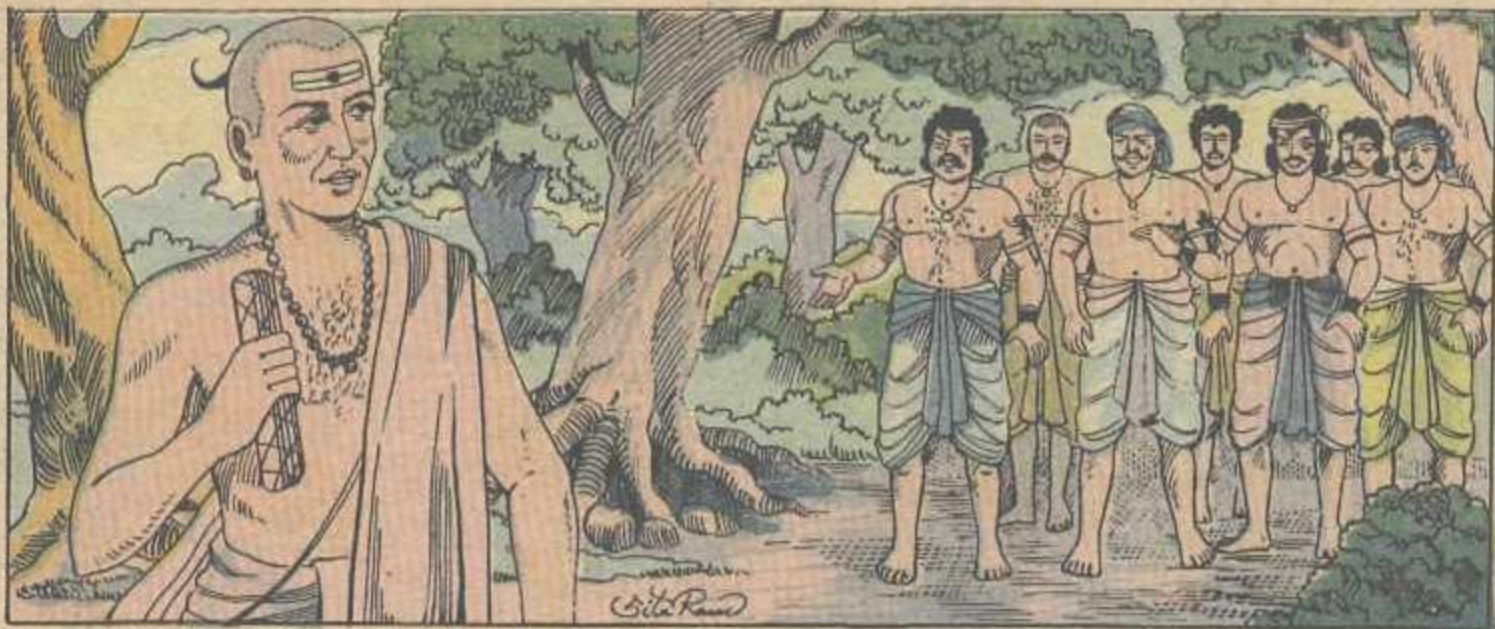
STRANGE CREATURES

Ramu : Brother, where do tales grow?

Brother : Why, Ramu? Don't you see tails growing at the bottom of animals?

Ramu : I see that and you see that, but our teacher says that tales grow in the heads of the writers! Must be strange creatures!





THE NIGHT THE PUNDIT BECAME A BANDIT

Mahi Sharma, the astrologer of Shivpur was passing through the forest when he was seen by a gang of bandits. The bandit chief laughed and said, "Sometimes luck plays fun with us. Here is a beggar Brahmin who, I'm sure, carries nothing more than a few paise!"

"What to do then?" asked one of his lieutenants.

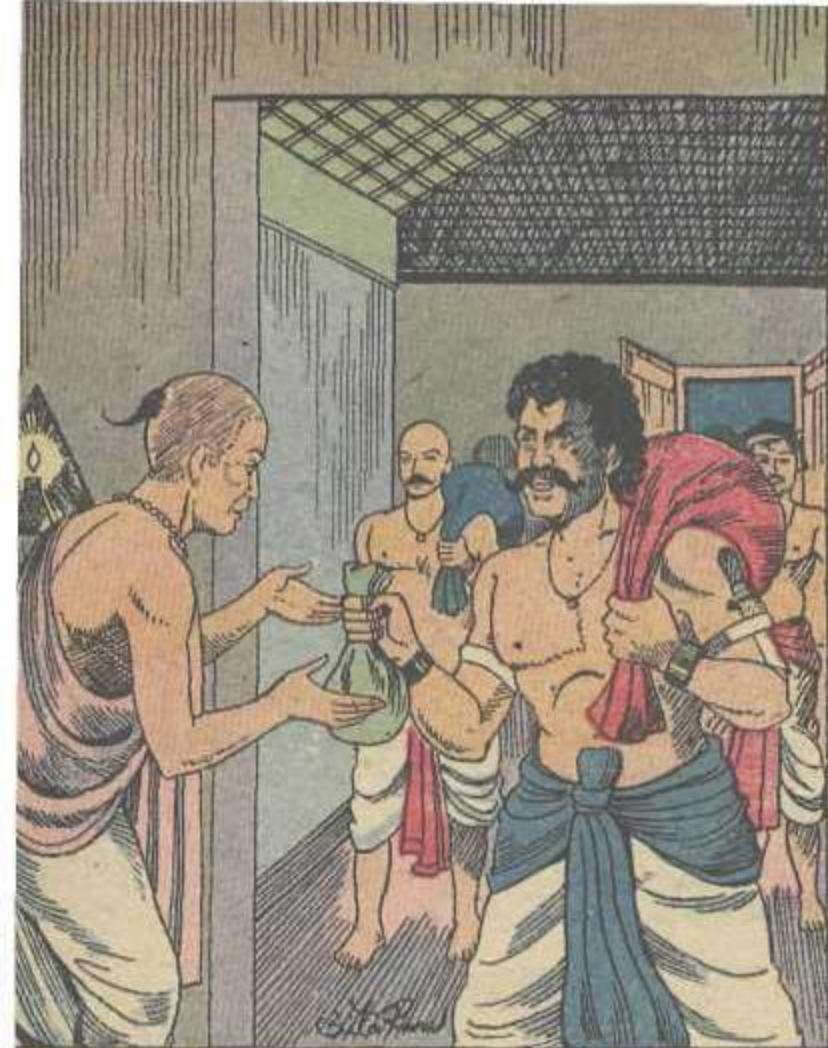
"Well, boy, we must do our work—be it for one paise or a thousand rupees!" said the chief.

The bandits advanced towards Sharma. Sharma had a rupee or so with him, which was big money for him. He felt very sad at the thought of losing that

much. Suddenly an idea struck his mind. He told the chief, "What is the use of robbing me of a few paise? Should you not rather consult me about the moments which are propitious for burglary?"

That was a good proposal. They requested Sharma to consult the almanac and tell them when they should go out of the forest on their mission.

Sharma told them the time which should be auspicious. The bandits followed his instruction and got a lot of loot. Out of gratefulness, the bandit chief sent five rupees to Sharma. The bandit who carried the reward to Sharma also asked him about



the next auspicious moment. Sharma consulted the almanac and briefed him about it.

The bandits followed his instruction and returned with much wealth again. After that it became a practice with them to consult Sharma for all their outings. After every burglary or dacoity they sent a fee to Sharma.

Sharma's fortune began to change. Along with that his greed increased. "Why should I not become a regular member of the gang and claim a full share of their booty?" he thought.

He met the bandit chief and

said, "Tonight you will gain much if you proceed to the east."

"East? Good. We have come to know about a merchant's house situated to the east of this place. We will strike there," said the priest.

"This time I will join your gang and have equal share with the other members of the gang," said Sharma.

The chief laughed and said, "Sharmaji, banditry is much different from consulting the almanac. At your age, you cannot learn the swiftness and alertness which are a must for a bandit. We will give you an equal share. Don't take the trouble of accompanying us."

But Sharma did not listen to him. He suspected that they will never give him a regular share. He joined them.

The house they entered belonged to a rich merchant. That was an auspicious day and all the members of the family had fasted that day. Next day they were to perform a Puja early in the morning. All the items with which food offerings for the deity must be prepared were kept in the family sanctum.

The bandits kept busy looting



the house in silence. Suddenly there rang a bell. Before the bandits could escape, the merchant and his sons sprang up from their beds. The bandits, in order to remain hidden for a moment, shut the door of the store room which they were ransacking. But the merchant's son could see them and he instantly locked the room. At his bidding the merchant shouted for help and the neighbours came rushing.

What had happened was this. When Sharma saw the items ready for being cooked, he forgot everything else and began

cooking in which he was an expert. As soon as the cooking was over, his eyes fell on the merchant's family deity. He offered the food to the deity and chanted the necessary hymns and rang the bell—as was his habit!

After the bandits were taken away by the police, the merchant rewarded Sharma with a thousand rupees, for everybody thought that Sharma who was passing by saw the bandits and rang the bell in order to wake up the merchant's family. Nobody except Sharma himself knew the facts!

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A BRIDE FOR THE GRANDPA ?

Ramprasad, the merchant, was known to be an upright man. The people of his locality respected him. He was in his sixties and he had an able son who took good care of his business. Ramprasad had lost his wife when he was fifty years of age.

One day Jai Shastri, the priest, called on Ramprasad for some work. Ramprasad suddenly asked him, "Shastri, can you find a girl, who should be in her twenties, to marry a man who is in his sixties?"

Shastri was surprised. He said after thinking over it for a moment, "Well, Sir, it should not be very difficult for me to find

out such a party. But, to be frank, the parents of such a girl may not be in a position to give any dowry!"

"Who wants dowry? In fact I will be happy to give something to the girl's father!" said Ramprasad.

"Very well. I'll report to you within a week," said Shastri. Shastri, no doubt, was surprised. But much more surprised was Rashmi, the wife of his son Shrikant, who overheard the conversation.

"Do you hear?" she whispered to her husband, "You're soon going to have a new mother. And, for your information, she may not be older than

I!"

"What nonsense are you speaking?" demanded Shrikant.

Rashmi reported to him whatever she had heard. Shrikant thought over it and said, "Well, I don't know why father took such a decision. But one thing is certain. Once he decides to do something, nobody can stop him from going ahead with it. No use our standing in his way."

Within two days this became the talk of the womenfolk of the village. Whenever the ladies saw Ramprasad they whispered to one another, "There goes the grandfather-bridegroom!" Ramprasad could not help hear-

ing such comments!

Then one day Shastri met Ramprasad. "I have located the girl whose parents are willing to marry her off to a man in his sixties. She is, in the next village. Her father is a poor man with three daughters. He is dying, worrying over the problem of marrying his daughters off. He has agreed to our proposal because he won't have to give any dowry. The girl, Lakshmi, is as beautiful as a goddess!"

"All right. Let us go and meet the girl's father," said Ramprasad.

Both proceeded to the next



village. The girl's father received them respectfully. Lakshmi was made to appear before them. Ramprasad saw that she was indeed extremely beautiful.

"When will you like to take her home?" the girl's father asked Ramprasad.

"I don't propose to take her home!" said Ramprasad.

Both Shastri and the girl's father looked surprised. In fact, the girl's father felt insulted.

"Then, Sir, what fun was there in all this?" asked the girl's father.

"No fun, but serious business. My father had been very rude towards my wife's father in realising dowry. My wife could never forget the anguish and harassment her father went through for arranging the dowry

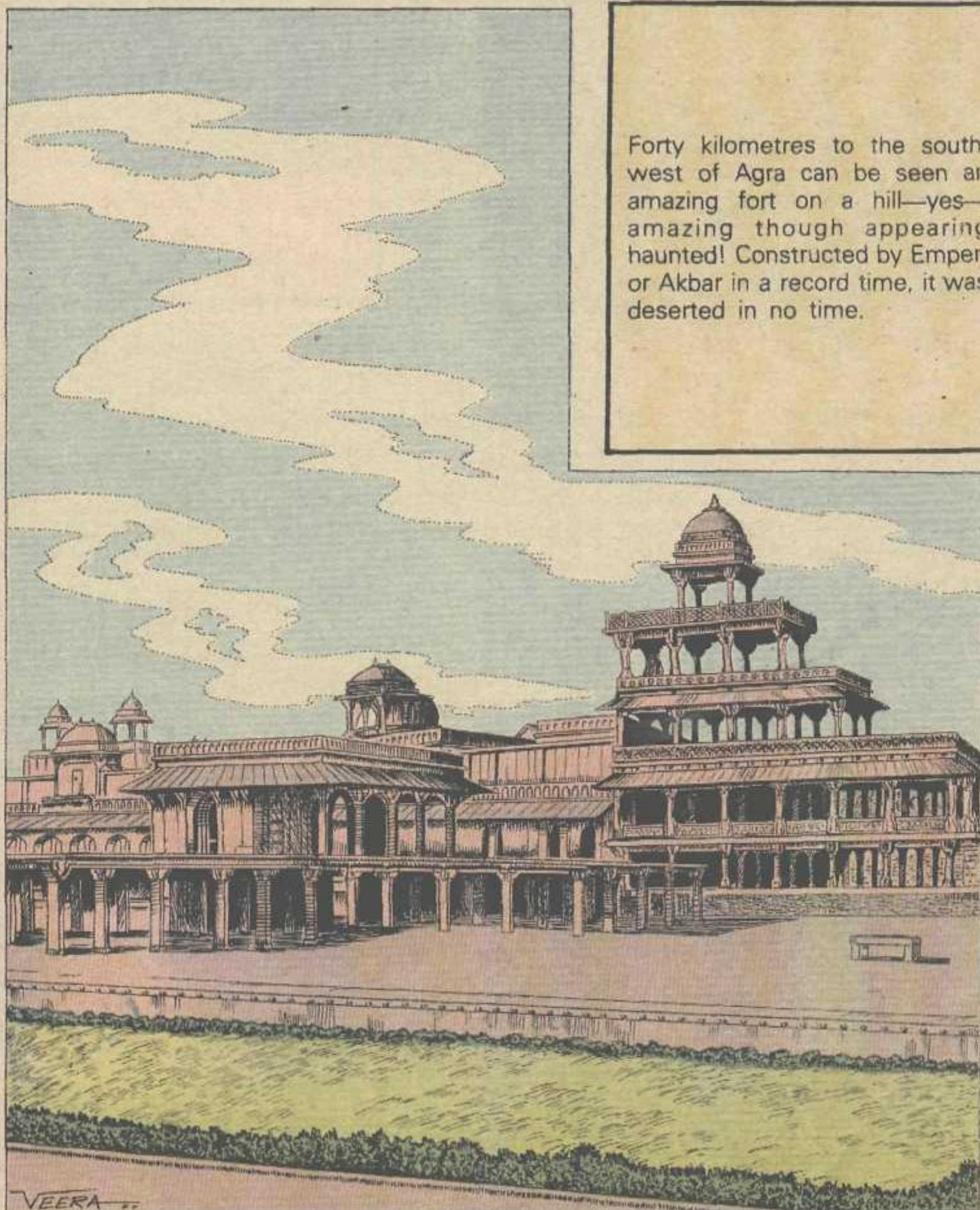
money. After my marriage if I prospered in business, that was because of my wife's prayers and help. Once when I asked her what I can give her now that I had enough money, she wanted nothing for herself. But she said that I should help any father who finds it difficult to marry off his daughter because he cannot arrange for dowry or marriage expense. I knew that one who was prepared to give his daughter in marriage with an old man was the worst suffering father," explained Ramprasad. Then he handed over a bagful of money to Lakshmi's mother who was listening to him with tears in her eyes.

And as long as Ramprasad was alive, he went on helping poor fathers. Also he carried on his battle against the cursed practice of dowry.



FATEHPUR SIKRI

Forty kilometres to the south-west of Agra can be seen an amazing fort on a hill—yes—amazing though appearing haunted! Constructed by Emperor Akbar in a record time, it was deserted in no time.





The ambitious Akbar had conquered many lands, but he was a sad man because he had not been blessed by an heir. He was told about a saint named Shaikh Salim Chisti living on a hill. He sought his blessings.

Akbar's Hindu wife gave birth to a son. The happy Akbar named him Salim, after the saint's name. He was to later become famous as Jahangir. Akbar was full of devotion for the saint.



Akbar thought of living as close to the saint as possible. He decided to shift his capital from Agra to that hill-top, Sikri. Construction of buildings began in great earnest.

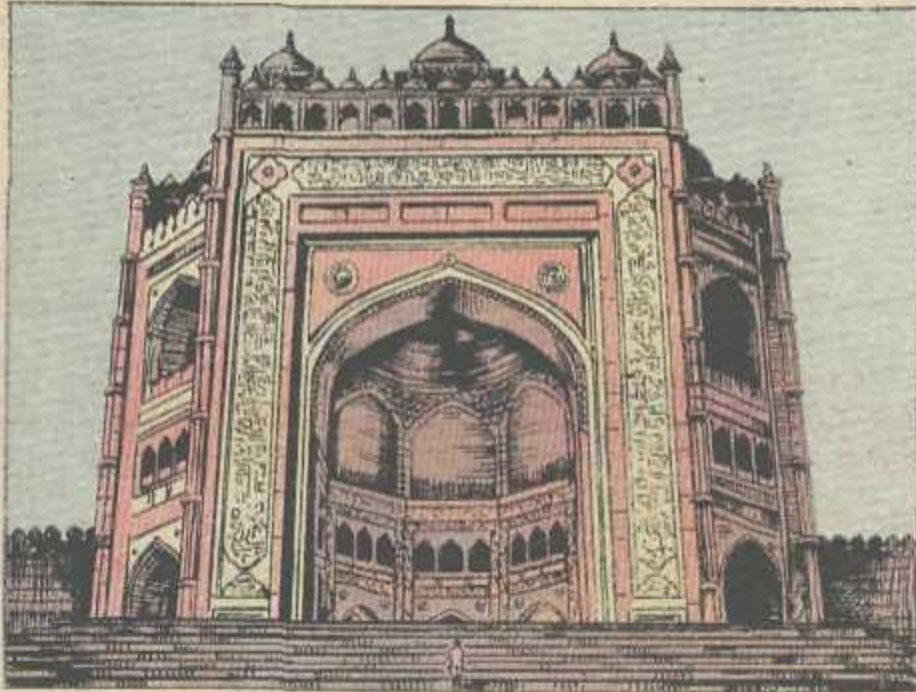
In 1573 Akbar led an expedition to Gujarat from Sikri. Several battles took place and Akbar faced great resistance, but he returned victorious. He added the phrase Fatehpur (the victory town) to Sikri.



Akbar lived here for fifteen years and at least some years were spent happily, in the company of his dear friend and minister, Birbal. Tansen too is said to have liked this place, beautiful in spring and monsoon.

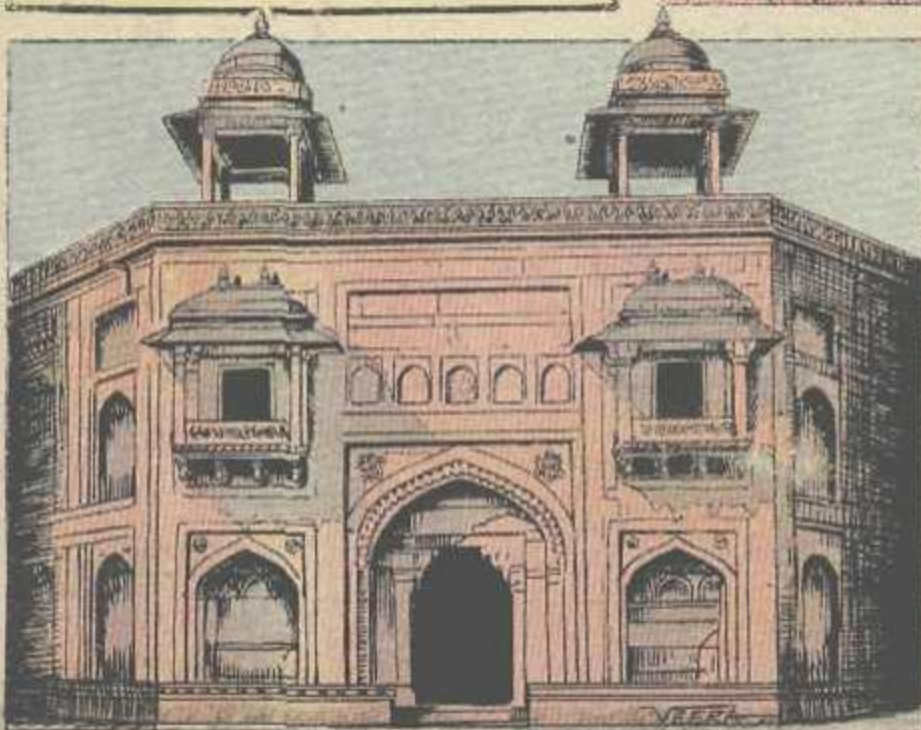
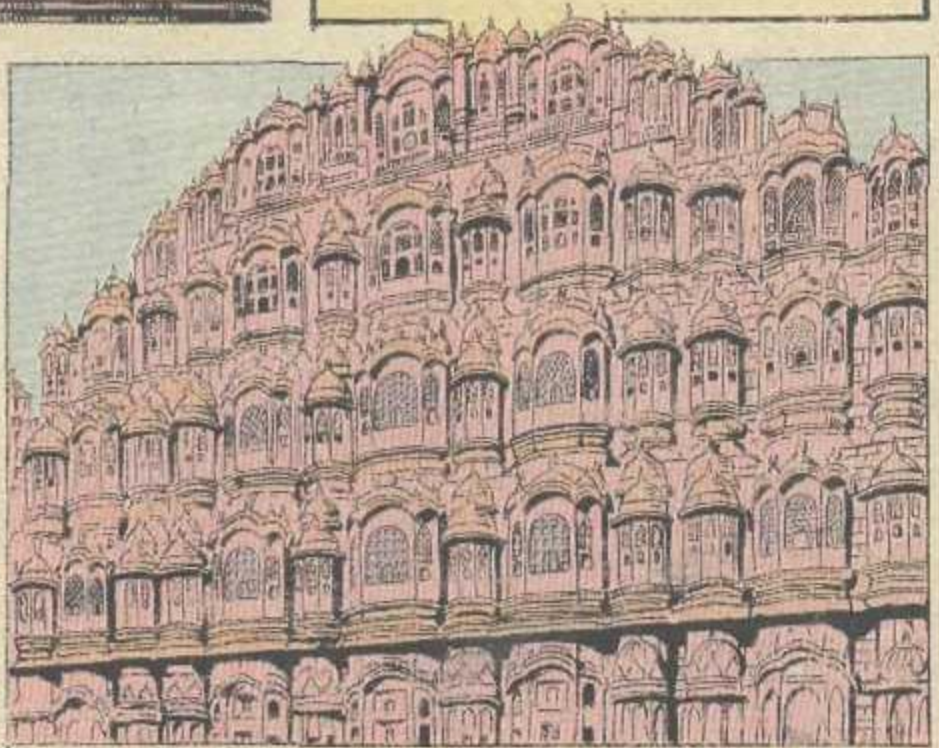
But their joys were short-lived. Fatehpur Sikri could not yield enough water to quench the thirst of its population. All efforts to tap sources of water failed.





It is here that we see Buland Darwaja, the largest gateway in India, 176 feet high from the ground and 134 feet from its platform. It is impressive and magnificent, built of marble and sandstone.

Yet another attractive monument is Hawa Mahal, a five-tiered building of terraces designed to be breezy. This was popular with the ladies of the fort during its good days.



Once the emperor left the fort, it was difficult to maintain it just for sake of its architecture. Over the centuries decay set in. Today, it has again become a great attraction for us.

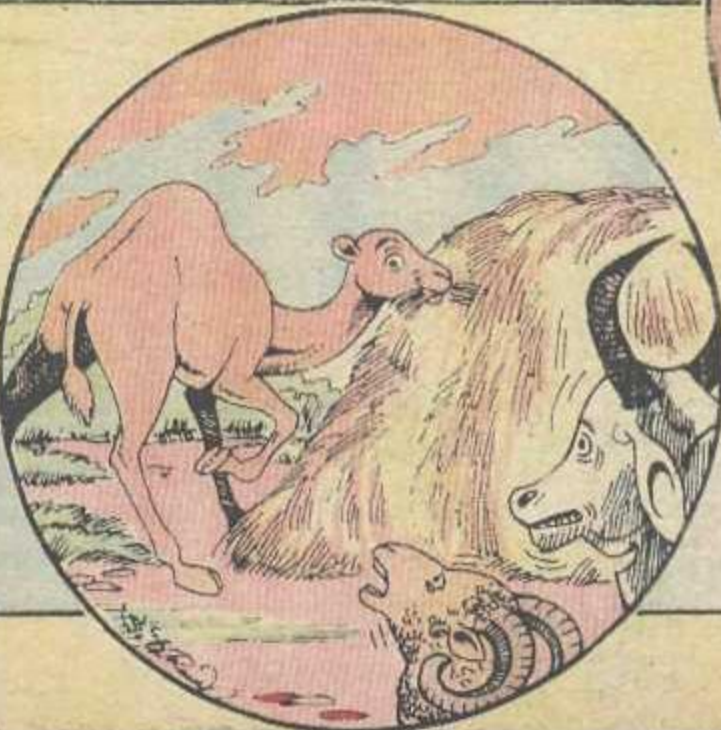
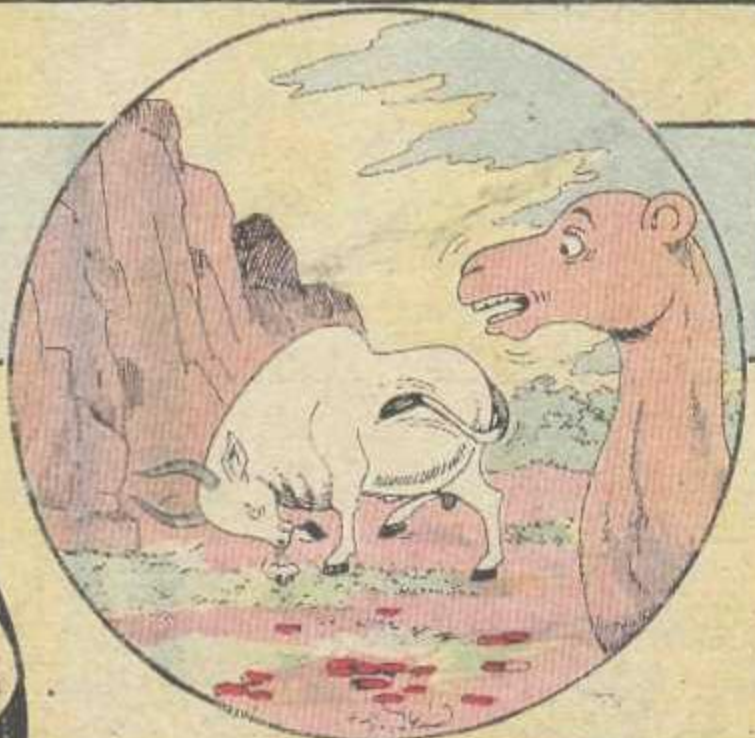
The Tall And The Tall Tales

Once a camel, an ox and a ram were going together when they saw a truss of hay. "Whoever among us is the oldest should eat this," said the camel.



"This river was born before my eyes," said the ram, pointing at the flowing waters. The camel was surprised.

"This hill grew up before me!" said the ox, pointing at the nearby hill. The camel was still more surprised, for he expected them to be truthful.



The camel at once picked up the hay and ate it and said, "After your two tall tales, I need not care to tell another, for I am too tall for you to stop me from eating it!"



A Tale from Hungary

MIRACLE WITH A SWORD

When King Mathews ascended the throne of Hungary, there was grave disorder in the country. The officers were not honest or alert, the common people were indifferent to the projects which the royal government tried to work out.

The new King was determined to bring reformation in every department of his government. With his sincerity and untiring efforts, he succeeded to a great extent.

But he found out that his soldiers were not disciplined at all. There were many allegations against them. Most of them were drunkards and gamblers. They did not receive handsome salary. Even then how could they afford such luxuries? The King wondered.

Desiring to find out the facts himself, the King put on the guise of a soldier and went out into the town one evening.

While passing by a wine shop, he heard loud laughter and shouts inside the shop. He entered it and saw four soldiers drinking and making merry. As soon as they saw the disguised King, they asked, "Friend, when did you become a soldier?"

"Only last week," replied the King.

"Welcome to twelve years of arduous labour!" they said, because according to the law of the time once one became a soldier he was bound to serve the King in that capacity for twelve years. But the task was not arduous except when there was war.

"Come on, entertain us to a

drink for you are newly admitted to our company," demanded the soldiers.

"Gentlemen, I am poor man. How can I entertain you to drinks?" pleaded the King.

One of the soldiers searched his pockets and found that he had four coins with him. "We knew that you have come prepared to befriend us through a drink," they said and each took a coin and drank with it without bothering to offer a peg to their host.

The King kept sitting quiet and observed them. After they had spent his money, one of them requested the wine-seller to give him another glass of drink on credit. But the seller refused to oblige him. The soldier offered his sword in lieu of the drink. To this the seller agreed.

Then all of them came out to the street. It was late in the night and the streets were completely deserted. One of them said, "Last night we began digging a hole into the wall of that store, but could not complete the work. Let us finish it tonight." Others agreed to it. They bored a hole into a provision store, but they had become



too unsteady to enter it.

"You seem to be quite brave and steady. Go in!" they ordered the King.

He did as they said. He entered the store and handed out loaves of bread and bottles of wine to them. Then he came out.

It was necessary for the soldiers to return to their camps before midnight. They were late. But the sentries at the gate were drunk themselves. So nobody questioned them.

The King remembered the faces of the four and then quietly returned to his palace.

In the morning he ordered for

all the soldiers of that camp to assemble on the parade ground. He wanted to inspect their regiment. The fact is, the King was terribly annoyed with those four soldiers—particularly with the one who pledged his sword for a glass of wine. The sword was the government's property!

All the soldiers assembled on the parade ground. The King marked one by one and recognised the fellow who had pledged his sword. But the sheath was hanging from his uniform. The King was sure that there was no sword in it. However, the soldier had managed to put a wooden sword in the sheath, borrowing it from a craftsman.

A criminal had been ordered to be punished with death. The King had the criminal brought

there and asked that swordless soldier to behead him.

The soldier was trembling with fear. "My Lord," he said, "I am under a vow that I will never kill a man except in the battlefield."

"Your service condition says that you must obey the King," the minister reminded the soldier.

The soldier stood blinking and then said, raising his hands in prayer, "O God, if I am true to my principle, let my steel sword turn into wood!"

Then, in a flash, he brought out his sword. Everybody saw that it was a wooden sword.

The King understood his trick. He was amused. He did not punish him, but dismissed him from service. Soon he took many steps to reform the army.



LAUGHTER AT DEATH

One day a stranger entered the court of Prince Yan of China. He impressed the Prince with his figure, his gait and his style of talking. He appeared to be a very wise man.

"I know the formula for a potion which will make you immortal," he confided to the Prince. "I can teach the formula to one of your trusted courtiers."

The Prince was excited. He chose a young scholar and asked him to learn the formula from the stranger.

The stranger was lodged in the best of the royal guest houses and provided with anything he wanted. And he wanted different kinds of delicious dishes. He loved to eat well.

Lo! He ate a bit too well. He died of over-eating.

"Have you learnt the formula?" the Prince asked the scholar.

"No, Your Majesty, there was no..."

"Put this fellow to death!" ordered the angry Prince.

The scholar was led to the execution ground. He laughed and laughed wildly.

"Why are you laughing?" asked the Prince.

"Now that I am going to die, I have no fear to ask you a question: if the stranger knew the potion for immortality, why should he die himself?" said the scholar.

The embarrassed Prince had no answer. The scholar was put to death, still laughing, but the Prince forgot how to laugh for the rest of his life. Everybody laughed at him.





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"MADAM, I'M ADAM!"

"What is a *palindrome*?" Ravi Murthy of Bangalore wants to know.

A palindrome is a word or a phrase or a sentence that can remain unchanged when read backward. For example, *Deed*, *Noon* or *Nun*. A widely popular palindrome is *Madam, I'm Adam*! A new example is *Was it a car or a cat I saw?*

John of Calcutta asks, "What does *They are hands in glove* mean?"

The phrase is *hand in glove* and not *hands in glove*, though it is applied to more than one person. *They are hand in glove* means they are in very intimate terms; they are very close companions. Just as hand and glove generally fit each other, the temperament and taste of the friends referred to are quite similar.

Swapna Zamindar of Bombay feels "embarrassed to ask a trivial question" as she puts it: whether practice in verb should be *practise* or *practice*.

Let us assure her that there is nothing embarrassing in getting a doubt resolved. This section of your magazine is meant for helping you in your handling of English. Practice as verb is *practise* according to the British tradition which we follow. But the American spelling of *practice* even as verb remains the same. That, naturally, confuses many, for we read English writings coming from all the countries!



CHARACTERS FROM CLASSICS

NISHAKAR

THE DWELLER IN A WELL

The little boy Nishakār was not only ugly, but also quite stupid and arrogant. He lived in a forest, in a hamlet of hermits, a place where he did not fit at all!

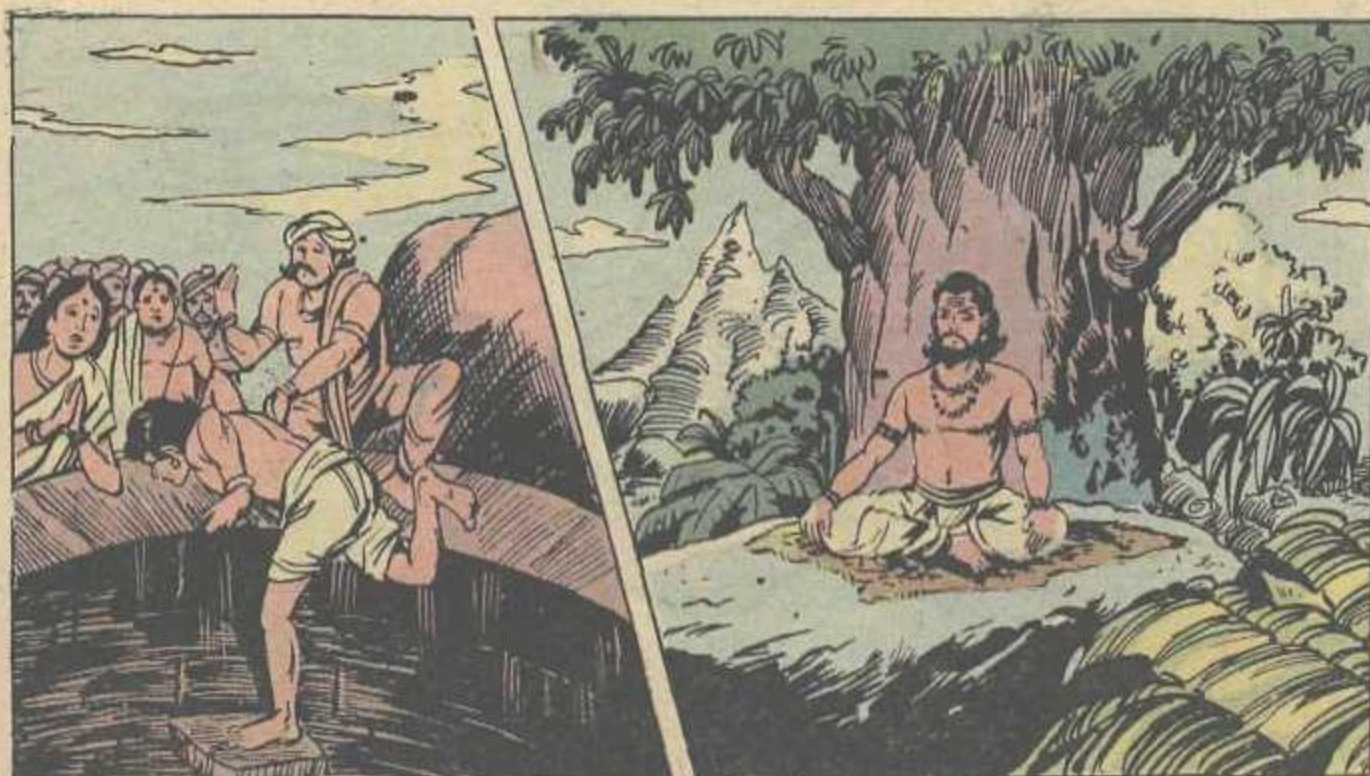
One day he just disappeared! His mother, Dharmistha, was the only person who looked for him here and there, but with no success. Neighbours told her that he might have been carried away by a tiger or a panther.

Years passed. While coming back from a neighbour's house to her own house, Dharmistha happened to pass by an old well. "I wonder who shut this well!" she spoke to herself, leaning over the stone which was laid on the opening of the well.

"Is it my mother?" a voice asked from the bottom of the well. Dharmistha had no difficulty in recognising the voice. It was her son Nishakar's!

She called some people and removed the stone and brought her son out. Someone had pushed him into the well and had placed the boulder on its opening to stop him from coming out. He lived on the fruits and roots of the plants and creepers which had grown around the water inside the well. He used to meditate to know why such a fate befell him. By and by he learnt about his earlier lives. He had been lusty and treacherous again and again. However, he had atoned for his sins and now he was a man of clean mind.

Thereafter he did severe penance and became a sage.





LET US KNOW

It said that while Vyasa was dictating the *Mahabharata* to Ganesha, the latter would sometimes write in advance the very stanzas Vyasa would say. From this can we say that Ganesha was also a partial author of the epic?

—*Saswat Kumar Jena,
Cuttack.*

The legend reveals a subtle fact. Ganesha could sometimes read Vyasa's inspiration and would put it down before Vyasa had formulated it into words. But the inspiration was Vyasa's; he had invoked the Muse. Ganesha in his godly compassion and exemplary humility, was helping him by taking down what he was reciting.

How is the High Commission different from Embassy?

—*Pundarikakshya Purohit*

The Embassy representing a country which is a member of the British Commonwealth in another such country (member of the Commonwealth) is High Commission. There, the Ambassador is known as the High Commissioner.

What is known as the Eighth Wonder of the world?

—*S.P. Laxman,
Hanamkonda.*

Perhaps you know about the Seven Wonders of the World. No specific monument or object is acknowledged as the Eighth Wonder. Any one, in order to emphasise the greatness of a thing by which he is impressed, described it as the Eighth Wonder. For example, a tourist described the famous Iron Pillar of Delhi (near Kutb Minar) as the Eighth Wonder of the World.



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PICKS FROM THE WISE

Liberty is the one thing you can't have unless you give it to others
—William Alen White

True friendship is like sound health, the value of it is seldom known until it be lost

—Charles Caleb Colton

Dignity does not consist in possessing honours, but in deserving them.
—Aristotle

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